

CHAPTER 281  
CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

**645—281.1(154C) Definitions.** For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:  
“*Active license*” means the license of a person who is acting, practicing, functioning and working in compliance with license requirements.

“*Administrator*” means the administrator of the board of social work examiners.

“*Approved program/activity*” means a continuing education program/activity meeting the standards set forth in these rules, which has received advance approval by the board pursuant to these rules.

“*Approved sponsor*” means a person or an organization sponsoring continuing education activities that has been approved by the board as a sponsor pursuant to these rules. During the time an organization, educational institution, or person is an approved sponsor, all continuing education activities of such organization, educational institution, or person may be deemed automatically approved.

“*Audit*” means the selection of licensees for verification of satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements during a specified time period or the selection of providers for verification of adherence to continuing education provider requirements during a specified time period.

“*Board*” means the board of social work examiners.

“*Continuing education*” means planned, organized learning acts acquired during licensure designed to maintain, improve, or expand a licensee’s knowledge and skills in order for the licensee to develop new knowledge and skills relevant to the enhancement of practice, education, or theory development to improve the safety and welfare of the public.

“*Hour of continuing education*” means a clock hour spent by a licensee in actual attendance at and completion of approved continuing education activity.

“*Inactive license*” means the license of a person who is not engaged in practice in the state of Iowa.

“*Lapsed license*” means a license that a person has failed to renew as required, or the license of a person who has failed to meet stated obligations for renewal within a stated time.

“*License*” means license to practice.

“*Licensee*” means any person licensed to practice as a social worker in the state of Iowa.

“*Self-study course*” means a form of systematic learning performed at a licensee’s residence, office, or other private location including, but not limited to, viewing of videotapes, participating in studies electronically transmitted from another location, or participating in self-assessment testing (open book tests that are completed by the licensee, submitted to the provider, graded, and returned to the licensee with correct answers and an explanation of why the answer chosen by the provider was the correct answer).

**645—281.2(154C) Continuing education requirements.**

**281.2(1)** The biennial continuing education compliance period shall extend for a two-year period beginning on January 1 of each odd-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the next even-numbered year. (To implement this rule change, the continuing education period for the December 31, 2000, renewal will run from July 1, 1998, to December 31, 2000.) Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as a licensee in this state shall be required to complete a minimum of 27 hours of continuing education approved by the board.

**281.2(2)** Requirements of new licensees. Those persons licensed for the first time during the license renewal period shall not be required to complete continuing education as a prerequisite for the first renewal of their licenses. Continuing education hours acquired anytime from the initial licensing until the second renewal may be used. The new licensee will be required to complete a minimum of 27 hours of continuing education per biennium for each subsequent license renewal.

**281.2(3)** Hours of continuing education credit may be obtained by attending and participating in a continuing education activity. These hours must be approved by the board or otherwise meet the requirements herein and be approved by the board pursuant to statutory provisions and the rules that implement them.

**281.2(4)** No hours of continuing education shall be carried over into the next biennium except as stated for the second renewal.

**281.2(5)** It is the responsibility of each licensee to finance the cost of continuing education.

**281.2(6)** The licensee shall maintain a personal file with all documentation of the continuing education credits obtained.

**645—281.3(154C) Standards for approval.**

**281.3(1) General criteria.** A continuing education activity which meets all of the following criteria is appropriate for continuing education credit if it is determined by the board that the continuing education activity:

*a.* Constitutes an organized program of learning which contributes directly to the professional competency of the licensee;

*b.* Pertains to subject matters which integrally relate to the practice of the profession;

*c.* Is conducted by individuals who have specialized education, training and experience by reason of which said individuals should be considered qualified concerning the subject matter of the program. The application must be accompanied by a paper, manual or outline which substantively pertains to the subject matter of the program and reflects program schedule, goals and objectives. The board may request the qualifications of presenters.

*d.* Fulfills stated program goals, objectives, or both;

*e.* Provides proof of attendance to licensees in attendance including:

(1) Date, location, course title, presenter(s);

(2) Number of program contact hours (One contact hour equals one hour of continuing education credit.); and

(3) Official signature or verification by program sponsor; and

*f.* Contains one of the following content areas:

(1) Theories and concepts of human behavior and the social environment;

(2) Social work practice knowledge and skills;

(3) Social work research, program evaluation, or practice evaluation;

(4) Management, administration, and social policy;

(5) Social work ethics as they relate to 645—280.101(154C); and

(6) An area deemed by the board to be of current importance.

**281.3(2) Specific criteria.** Continuing education hours of credit can be obtained by completing:

*a.* A minimum of three hours per biennium in social work ethics.

*b.* A maximum of 12 hours per biennium for self-study courses.

*c.* Academic coursework that meets the criteria set forth in the rules. Continuing education equivalents are as follows:

1 academic semester hour = 15 continuing education hours

1 academic quarter hour = 10 continuing education hours

*d.* Self-study courses that have a mentor and prior approval as defined in the rules and are accompanied by a brief paper authored by the licensee demonstrating application of the learning objectives to practice issues.

*e.* Programs designed for the purpose of enhancing the licensee's administrative, management or other clinical skills.

*f.* A program or course which is offered or sponsored by an approved continuing education sponsor.

g. Activities/programs that are sponsored/approved by ASWB Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program.

h. Pro-bono/volunteer work that meets the following criteria:

(1) A licensee may earn a maximum of 3 of the required 27 hours of continuing education for credit during one biennium by performing pro-bono/volunteer services for indigent, underserved populations, or in areas of critical need within the state of Iowa. Such services must be approved in advance by the board.

(2) A licensee shall make application for prior approval of pro-bono/volunteer services by sending a letter to the board indicating that the following requirements will be met:

1. The site for these services is identified including information about the clients, the services that will be offered, how they will be performed and the learning objectives.

2. A contract will be established between licensee and client(s), and each party will be aware that the services are being provided without charge.

3. The services will be subject to all the legal responsibilities and obligations related to the licensee's profession.

4. The licensee will keep records and files of these client services pursuant to the rules of 645—Chapter 280.

5. A representative from the site for pro-bono/volunteer services must provide a letter stating that these services are to be performed by the licensee.

6. Upon review, the licensee will receive a letter from the board indicating prior approval for these pro-bono/volunteer services that will be done for continuing education credit.

7. Following completion of such services:

- The licensee must provide the board a letter stating that the services were performed as planned.
- The representative on the site must provide a letter indicating such completion.

#### **645—281.4(154C) Approval of sponsors, programs, and activities for continuing education.**

**281.4(1) Approval of sponsors.** An applicant who desires approval as a sponsor of courses, programs, or other continuing education activities shall, unless exempted elsewhere in these rules, apply for approval to the board on the form designated by the board stating the applicant's educational history for the preceding two years or proposed plan for the next two years.

a. The form shall include the following:

(1) Date, location, course title(s) offered and outline of content;

(2) Total hours of instruction presented;

(3) Names and qualifications of instructors including résumés or vitae; and

(4) Evaluation form(s).

b. Records shall be retained by the sponsor for four years.

c. An attendance record report. The person or organization sponsoring an approved continuing education activity shall provide a certificate of attendance or verification to the licensee providing the following information:

(1) Program date(s);

(2) Course title and presenter;

(3) Location;

(4) Number of clock hours attended and continuing education hours earned;

(5) Name of sponsor and sponsor number;

(6) Licensee's name; and

(7) Method of instruction.

*d.* All approved sponsors shall maintain a copy of the following:

- (1) The continuing education activity;
- (2) A list of enrolled licensees' names and license numbers; and
- (3) Number of continuing education clock hours awarded for a minimum of four years from the date of the continuing education activity.

*e.* The sponsor shall submit a report of all continuing education programs conducted in the previous year during the assigned month for reporting designated by the board. The report shall include:

- (1) Date(s), location, course title(s) offered and outline of content;
- (2) Total hours of instruction presented;
- (3) Names and qualifications of instructors including résumés or vitae;
- (4) Evaluation form(s); and
- (5) A summary of the evaluations completed by the licensees.

**281.4(2) *Prior approval of programs/activities.*** An organization or person other than an approved sponsor that desires prior approval of a course, program or other education activity or that desires to establish accreditation of such activity prior to attendance shall apply for approval to the board on a form provided by the board at least 60 days in advance of the commencement of the activity. The board shall approve or deny such application in writing within 30 days of receipt of such application. The application shall state:

- a.* The date(s);
- b.* Course(s) offered;
- c.* Course outline;
- d.* Total hours of instruction; and
- e.* Names and qualifications of speakers and other pertinent information.

The organization or person shall be notified of approval or denial by ordinary mail.

**281.4(3) *Review of programs.*** Continuing education programs/activities shall be reported every year at the designated time as assigned by the board. The board may at any time reevaluate an approved sponsor. If, after reevaluation, the board finds there is cause for revocation of the approval of an approved sponsor, the board shall give notice of the revocation to that sponsor by certified mail. The sponsor shall have the right to hearing regarding the revocation. The request for hearing must be sent within 20 days after the receipt of the notice of revocation. The hearing shall be held within 90 days after the receipt of the request for hearing. The board shall give notice by certified mail to the sponsor of the date set for the hearing at least 30 days prior to the hearing. The board shall conduct the hearing in compliance with rule 645—11.9(17A).

**281.4(4) *Postapproval of activities.*** A licensee seeking credit for attendance and participation in an educational activity which was not conducted by an approved sponsor or otherwise approved shall submit to the board, within 60 days after completion of such activity, the following:

- a.* The date(s);
- b.* Course(s) offered;
- c.* Course outline;
- d.* Total hours of instruction and credit hours requested;
- e.* Names and qualifications of speakers and other pertinent information;
- f.* Request for credit which includes a brief summary of the activity; and
- g.* Certificate of attendance or verification.

Within 90 days after receipt of such application, the board shall advise the licensee in writing by ordinary mail whether the activity is approved and the number of hours allowed. A licensee not complying with the requirements of this subrule may be denied credit for such activity.

**281.4(5) *Voluntary relinquishment.*** The approved sponsor may voluntarily relinquish sponsorship by notifying the board office in writing.

**645—281.5(154C) Reporting continuing education by licensee.** At the time of license renewal, each licensee shall be required to submit a report on continuing education to the board on a board-approved form.

**281.5(1)** The information included on the form shall include:

- a. Title of continuing education activity;
- b. Date(s);
- c. Sponsor of the activity;
- d. Board-approved sponsor number; and
- e. Number of continuing education hours earned.

**281.5(2)** Audit of continuing education report. After each educational biennium, the board will audit a percentage of the continuing education reports before granting the renewal of licenses to those being audited.

- a. The board will select licensees to be audited.
- b. The licensee shall make available to the board for auditing purposes a copy of the certificate of attendance or verification for all reported activities that includes the following information:
  - (1) Date, location, course title, schedule (brochure, pamphlet, program, presenter(s)) and method of presentation;
  - (2) Number of contact hours for program attended; and
  - (3) Indication of successful completion of the course.
- c. For auditing purposes, the licensee must retain the above information for two years after the biennium has ended.
- d. Submission of a false report of continuing education or failure to meet continuing education requirements may cause the license to lapse and may result in formal disciplinary action.
- e. All renewal license applications that are submitted late (after the end of the compliance period) may be subject to audit of continuing education report.
- f. Failure to receive the renewal application shall not relieve the licensee of responsibility of meeting continuing education requirements and submitting the renewal fee by the end of the compliance period.

**645—281.6(154C) Reinstatement of lapsed license.** Failure of the licensee to renew within 30 days after expiration date shall cause the license to lapse. A person who allows a license to lapse cannot engage in practice in Iowa without first complying with all regulations governing reinstatement as outlined in the board rules. A person who allows the license to lapse may apply to the board for reinstatement of the license. Reinstatement of the lapsed license may be granted by the board if the applicant:

1. Submits a written application for reinstatement to the board;
2. Pays all of the renewal fees then due;
3. Pays all late fees which have been assessed by the board for failure to renew;
4. Pays reinstatement fee(s); and
5. Provides evidence of satisfactory completion of Iowa continuing education requirements during the period since the license lapsed. The total number of continuing education hours required for license reinstatement is computed by multiplying 27 by the number of bienniums since the license lapsed.
6. If the license has lapsed for more than one biennium, the applicant shall successfully pass the board-approved licensure examination.

**645—281.7(154C,272C) Continuing education waiver for active practitioners.** A social worker licensed to practice social work shall be deemed to have complied with the continuing education requirements of this state during the period that the licensee serves honorably on active duty in the military services or as a government employee outside the United States as a practicing social worker.

**645—281.8(154C,272C) Continuing education exemption for inactive practitioners.** A licensee who is not engaged in practice in the state of Iowa may be granted an exemption of continuing education compliance and obtain a certificate of exemption upon written application to the board. The application shall contain a statement that the applicant will not engage in practice in Iowa without first complying with all regulations governing reinstatement after exemption. The application for an exemption shall be submitted upon forms provided by the board. The licensee shall have completed the required continuing education at the time of reinstatement.

**645—281.9(154C,272C) Continuing education waiver for disability or illness.** The board may, in individual cases involving disability or illness, grant waivers of the minimum educational requirements or extension of time within which to fulfill the same or make the required reports. No waiver or extension of time shall be granted unless written application therefor is made on forms provided by the board and signed by the licensee and appropriate licensed health care practitioners. The board may grant waiver of the minimum educational requirements for any period of time not to exceed one calendar year from the onset of disability or illness. In the event that the disability or illness upon which a waiver has been granted continues beyond the period of waiver, the licensee must reapply for an extension of the waiver. The board may, as a condition of any waiver granted, require the applicant to make up a certain portion or all of the minimum educational requirements waived by such methods as may be prescribed by the board.

**645—281.10(154C,272C) Reinstatement of inactive practitioners.** Inactive practitioners who have been granted a waiver of compliance with these rules and obtained a certificate of exemption shall, prior to engaging in the practice of social work in the state of Iowa, satisfy the following requirements for reinstatement.

**281.10(1)** Submit written application for reinstatement to the board upon forms provided by the board with appropriate reinstatement fee; and

**281.10(2)** Furnish in the application evidence of one of the following:

*a.* Completion of a total number of hours of approved continuing education computed by multiplying 27 (which includes three hours of ethics) by the number of bienniums a certificate of exemption shall be in effect for such applicant; or

*b.* Successful completion of any or all parts of the board-approved licensure examination as deemed necessary by the board, successfully completed within one year immediately prior to the submission of such application for reinstatement.

**645—281.11(272C) Hearings.** In the event of denial, in whole or part, of any application for approval of a continuing education program or credit for continuing education activity, the applicant, licensee or program provider shall have the right within 20 days after the sending of the notification of denial by ordinary mail to request a hearing which shall be held within 90 days after receipt of the request for hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by the board or an administrative law judge designated by the board, in substantial compliance with the hearing procedure set forth in rule 645—11.9(17A).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 272C.2 and chapter 154C.

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#### CHAPTER 282

##### PETITIONS FOR RULE MAKING

Rescinded IAB 6/16/99, effective 7/21/99\*

#### CHAPTER 283

##### DECLARATORY RULINGS

Rescinded IAB 6/16/99, effective 7/21/99\*

#### CHAPTER 284

##### CHILD SUPPORT NONCOMPLIANCE

Rescinded IAB 6/16/99, effective 7/21/99\*

#### CHAPTER 285

##### IMPAIRED PRACTITIONER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Rescinded IAB 6/16/99, effective 7/21/99\*

#### CHAPTERS 286 to 288

Reserved

#### CHAPTER 289

##### PUBLIC RECORDS AND FAIR INFORMATION PRACTICES

Rescinded IAB 6/16/99, effective 7/21/99\*

#### CHAPTERS 290 to 299

Reserved

\*Effective date of **ARC 9102A** delayed 70 days by the Administrative Rules Review Committee at its meeting held July 13, 1999; delay lifted at the meeting held August 3, 1999, effective August 4, 1999.